



# The Searchlight

To Members of the  
The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc.



Volume 23, No. 1

March 2014

## An Interview with Mark Ireland

by Michael E. Tymn

In his 2008 book, *Soul Shift*, Mark Ireland explains how he was able to deal with his grief after the death of his 18-year-old son, Brandon, on January 10, 2004, the result of a severe asthma attack and heart failure while hiking in some rugged Arizona mountains.

"What had begun with Brandon and a wish not to absolutely lose someone I loved so much had turned into a quest to find the elusive meaning behind life and death and perhaps even to discover that no one is really lost," Ireland writes. "Brandon was central to my search, but he was no longer the only target."



Ireland had something of an advantage over most people, as his father, Richard Ireland, was a medium and Spiritualist minister before he transitioned in 1992. Two days after Brandon's transition, Ireland received a phone call from his uncle, Robert, who, like his brother, also had mediumistic ability, although not as developed. He told Mark that he had heard from Mark's father, who said that Brandon was initially confused when he left the body, but he (grandfather Richard) was there to greet him and help him adjust. He explained that Brandon's heart failed due to lack of oxygen, and while he experienced shortness of breath, he felt no pain.

About seven months later, Ireland consulted renowned medium Allison DuBois, receiving much in the way of evidential information. He also sat with mediums Linda Williamson, Jamie Clark, and Laurie Campbell, receiving evidential messages and comforting words from all of them.

"When something like this happens, you have two options," Ireland offers. "You can either give up on life or move forward, directing your energy toward something positive, to help other people." As cofounder of Helping Parents Heal, Ireland is doing just that. His newest book *Messages From The Afterlife: A Bereaved Father's Journey In The World Of Spirit Visitations, Psychic-Mediums, And Synchronicity*, was released during December. I recently put some questions to him by e-mail

*first book didn't?*

"My first book was a memoir and the focus was on the personal journey I embarked upon after losing my youngest son, Brandon, including evidence pointing to the survival of his conscious awareness and personality after physical death.

"*Messages from the Afterlife* continues with the personal narrative, and includes anecdotal stories evidencing the afterlife, but that is where the similarities end. *Messages* is a more multi-faceted book, endeavoring to educate readers about afterlife evidence—especially mediumship. One professional reviewer, Jane Katra, used the term "scholarly book" when describing *Messages*, so it seems my efforts were not lost on her.

"Provocative elements include an examination of psychic-medium phenomena through the lens of multiple religious traditions—including some factions that seek to demonize spirit communication—as well as a candid exposé of debunker-style skepticism.

"The new book also features the detailed account of an experiment I designed involving a secret message left behind by my deceased sister. The contents of this message were unknown to any living person and remained sealed in an envelope—untouched—until responses had been received from a group of qualified mediums who sought to decode the contents. My sister who was terminally ill at the time gladly agreed to participate because she saw how this might help other grieving people in the future.

"Despite the educational angle, *Messages* is not a dry dissertation. It is a deeply personal and moving book that balances both "spiritual" and "scientific" elements."

*I would think that with your father having been a medium that you were better prepared to deal with the grief, but I gather from your first book that this was not the case. Would you mind explaining?*

"I was actually better prepared for this than most people, but the shock of losing a child is overwhelming for a parent. No matter what you believe, or *know*, the pain of physical separation is grueling. So I desired my own connections after my son passed, not so much for 'proof' but for the comfort brought by knowing that I had connected

*Mark, what does your latest book get into that your*

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and communed with my child. On a side note, my publisher pushed the editing of *Soul Shift* in a direction to give the impression that there was more tension between my father and me than really was the case. I was not a disbeliever—I'd seen far too much evidence growing up for that. I just wasn't particularly interested in the field or following in my father's footsteps when growing up. But I always remembered my father's psychic capacity and ability to deliver messages from spirit with startling specificity and accuracy. I never forgot this and it helped me when Brandon passed. It also drove me to dive into a field that was very important to my father, so today I'm carrying his work forward and doing my own as well."

*In the various sittings you had after Brandon's death, was there any one communication that really convinced you that he had survived? What was most evidential?*

"I had many sittings that provided solid evidence of Brandon's survival, but there was one particular reading that stood out as 'the best of the best.' This reading, from Tucson, Arizona medium Tina Powers, included communication delivered in my son's exact tone and intonation, as if she had become a direct channel. While in this 'zone' she spoke to a very specific issue that she could not have known about. It reminded me of the movie 'Ghost,' in the scene where Patrick Swayze (deceased) used Whoopi Goldberg as a vessel for communication with Swayze's movie wife, Demi Moore. Receiving compelling information is great, but to have it delivered in this way—where your loved one's personality comes through so clearly and unmistakably takes things to a whole different level."

*It is often said that the medium's subconscious colors messages, resulting in wrong or confusing messages. Did you experience this? If so, did it cause doubts.*

"Yes, I did experience this and it dampened my enthusiasm a little bit initially. But it didn't cause deep doubts, because some of the messages were so specific and accurate. It just made me wonder why there were inconsistencies, so I dug deeper in an effort to understand what was going on. And from my search I gained insights into the ways mediums get the information they relay, which for the most part answered my question. Mental mediums rely on a variety of impressions, from visions to feelings, to words that may come to them in piece-meal fashion. Ultimately I see mediumship as a sort of a mental Morse code that sometimes comes through intermittently. In such cases the medium is either left to try and decipher the information, piecing it

together, or to just state exactly what they perceive in hopes that it will make sense to the sitter. At other times, the flow of information seems to go very smoothly and the medium is 'dialed in,' delivering hit after hit. Regarding this phenomenon, I recall something my father wrote about many years ago, indicating that the psychic faculty surges and wanes much like the tide. Mediumship functions through the psychic muscle and therefore it is subject to its characteristics and limitations."

*How does Helping Parents Heal work? Has the organization had many successes? Failures? Can you give an example or two?*

"Our organization provides information, resources, and support to bereaved parents on our Facebook page, our website, [www.helpingparentsh Heal.info](http://www.helpingparentsh Heal.info) and in our quarterly newsletter. Also, we have approximately 20 affiliates across North America that host monthly meetings. In these meetings bereaved parents assemble to share stories about their children and their unique experiences—and to make new friends who can relate to their situation. The organization has been successful because we fulfill a need that has been neglected by other groups. Our mission statement says it all:

*Helping Parents Heal is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting parents who have lost children, giving them support and resources to aid in the healing process. We go a step beyond other groups by allowing the open discussion of spiritual experiences and evidence for the afterlife, in a non-dogmatic way. Affiliate groups are expected to welcome everyone regardless of religious (or non-religious) background and allow for open dialog.*

"There are other groups that are far bigger than ours, but to my knowledge no other organization will allow for the discussion of afterlife evidence, so they're eliminating the 'hope' piece of the puzzle. That keeps a lot of people stuck in grief.

"As for failures, I'd just say that we wanted to become a 501C-3 charity, but there is so much red tape that we abandoned the idea."

*You mentioned a quest to find meaning in all of it? Have you found that meaning? If so, what is it?*

"I not sure I've found the meaning to it *all*, but I suspect my father was right in saying it's about love. I think our experiences are intended to hone us, bringing us to appreciate all aspects of life and being. Through a sort of 'soul evolution' we are moved to become compassionate, non-judgmental, and loving. We come to see the emptiness of a life too attached to material trappings and are led to a spiritual path, preparing us for eternity."

*Mark Ireland will be one of the speakers at the Academy's 2014 conference*

## President's Message: What Will 2014 Mean to You?

Since our last issue of *The Searchlight* we have all made it through the holidays of 2013. My hope is that they were meaningful and enjoyable for all. Mine were very happy and went by so quickly. I am still working on paperwork for a possible grant to raise my house four feet due to the Hurricane Sandy storm of 2012. Thanks to those who have sent good wishes on the house and on my column.

Our Board is continuing to work on our 2014 conference on *Afterlife Communication* in Scottsdale, Arizona from July 10 – 13. Hopefully you have all received our January issue of the Journal with the insert of speakers for the conference. If you haven't received the insert, please go on line to <http://www.ascsi.org> to download.

I have started to work on my talk for the conference, entitled, *The Making of a Medium*. In my June 2013 President's Message, I mentioned in reading Michael Tymn's book *Resurrecting Leonora Piper* that one of her spiritual guides tells her that he sends her thoughts of things that he wants her to know. This has been validated for me by clients who have come to me with mediumistic abilities. Their spiritual guides have stated that the veil between the physical plane and the astral plane is getting thinner and thinner because people here on earth are hurting. Human beings need help. Some people are just afraid and they can't define why. They validate that in the astral plane, there's an unseen world, as William James (1842-1910) stated.

The clients state that usually you don't speak to spirits on the astral plane directly. You just think things. And, then other thoughts return to you. This is how spiritual guides help you. I am told that in the early stages of mediumship, the person doesn't believe the images he or she is seeing are real. But eventually the person begins to trust what she or he is seeing and learns to interpret the meaning because the spirits keep the images coming. Apparently, spirits know how to nag to get you to do what they want.

I'm also told that when spirits are in a room, the energy feels dense. Good spirits are quick and to the point with the information they want to convey. They don't stay long once they realize you are listening to them. Negative spirits can be problematic and one has to learn how to create boundaries and send them away. Like with people, one must learn to be assertive. Apparently, there's an art, almost, to shutting down the negative images and sending those negative spirits away.



Spirits also make you wait for answers just like you wait for things here on earth. You are here to do the mental and physical work of life. Spirits help but they also wait to see if you are actually going to be responsible enough to do what you have to do. If you aren't responsible, they'll nag you a little more, but you are in charge. In this way, good spirits are like good parents. They wait to see if you learn from your mistakes after they have already given you some help. They want you to learn to be assertive and stand up for yourself to get what you want.

Once you've anchored good spirits you will be accessing information of the highest level. This will help you, as Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) said, to "Follow your bliss." What makes you the happiest? If you don't know this, you will have to learn first what you don't want. After a few "I don't want this or that" you will eventually start to grasp what you do want. You need to believe you deserve joy and happiness in order to follow your bliss. The whole purpose of spirits helping you is to create a vision. Take steps toward that vision and watch it start to materialize.

In creating a vision, you need to draw on the adult ego-state by using the verbs, *will, can, is, am, are* and *won't*. Instead, many people use their child ego-state verbs of, *want, need, hope* and *try*. If you are using your child verbs you need to bring your "inner child" out into the world and make him or her more "real" to you. Please begin by using your imagination and babysitting yourself at a certain age. Five years old is a good start, or perhaps you want to work with your adolescent at around twelve years of age.

Imagine what you looked like at the age you choose and then for a week explain to this child all about your life as you live it. You could begin in the morning explaining to the child what you are going to do on that day and with whom. At night, discuss your day with your child. Imagine what the child would say to you about what he/she liked or didn't like. Where was the child bored? What did the child dislike watching you do? In doing this exercise, you will learn the negative ways of thinking of this inner child who is usually ruling your life with fears, undisciplined habits and unconscious behavior.

Many of my clients don't like their child. They can give me many automatic streams of negative thoughts using their adult ego-state verbs such as, *must, should, ought, better, never* and *always*. A good movie to watch regarding this work with your child is *The Kid* (2000) starring Bruce Willis. Bruce eventually learns to listen to what his child knows about him in order to be able to see what the future

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## Tale from a Development Circle: When Sir Winston Spoke

by Anne R. Ricketts

Many readers have probably sat in development circles over the years. Each is run differently and each has particular goals. The lead is usually taken by a medium and the spirit guides who come to assist both the medium and the sitters. After time, a rapport develops, both among and between the spirit guides and the members of the circle. Each sitter has the opportunity to develop whatever skills he or she has and spirit guides provide the best assistance possible at the most appropriate time.

Many years ago, a development circle was led by a venerable lady, Miss Winifred Gandine-Stanton, who had sat with Sir Oliver Lodge. She had founded the Tunbridge Wells Psychic Studies Group after her retirement as Headmistress of a small private school, using her house with a dedicated 'sitting' room. By the time I joined the circle, she was in her early seventies. In joining her circle of many years standing, I, a young 20-something, was lucky enough to have the benefit of her many years' experience and standing. Naturally, I was young and keen and wanted to know everything about everything. I had no particular direction in mind so fell in easily with the ethos that development would occur according to whatever latent skills I may have and whatever Spirit had in mind. We were always instructed that what happened in the circle, remained in the circle. As sitters, we also knew very little of each other socially, and were not particularly encouraged to meet each other outside our weekly meetings or the monthly public talks about various subjects of interest.

In the 70s and 80s, there was little imperative to record our meetings, either by means of writing or using a tape-recorder, the only technology available to us at the time. Sadly, as you can imagine, some splendid stories could have been told had we only been more vigilant in our records. All manner of proof of survival after 'death', addresses from our Circle guide, evidence of successful healing, personal messages for the sitters, their friends and families, and spirit rescues were our regular diet. However, there is one unique story which I remember and thought readers may find of interest.

As a relative youngster in the circle, I took the instructions very seriously. After all, I was surrounded by elders and considered myself extremely lucky to have been admitted into the circle. The rule of 'what happened in the circle, remained in the circle' was deeply ingrained. When something out of the ordinary occurred, although I could discuss this with the other sitters, I often lacked the confidence to ask outright if I didn't understand. Looking back now, of course, this was

silky but there we are. At the time, the feeling of awe was palpable. Here is what happened.

In mid-1981, a little spirit girl arrived at the circle. She was about 2 or 3 years old, we guessed, and eventually introduced herself as Marigold. At the time, I had just given birth to my son and assumed that she was perhaps his spiritual playmate. Over a period of months, Marigold became a regular visitor, never speaking directly, but happy to be in our company, either playing on the floor or leaning on my knee, listening to the various messages.



Sir Winston Churchill

Shortly after this, and on several occasions, Sir Winston Churchill started coming through. I was very surprised, and somewhat awe-struck, but was told that he had visited Miss Stanton's circle on various occasions over the years. He gave details of what he thought the Government at the time, led by Margaret Thatcher, should be doing in the build up to the Falklands Conflict of 1982. Miss Stanton and the others, all my elders and far more experienced than I, never questioned this so I just accepted what was happening. They simply said that Clementine Churchill had had an interest in Spiritualism. I also knew that Hitler had used all means, both physical and metaphysical, to conduct his war and assumed Sir Winston had done the same.



Marigold Churchill

I accepted the premise that Sir Winston had been a 'guest speaker' in the past, but simply couldn't understand why he should be 'wasting his time' talking to an obscure development circle in Tunbridge Wells. Of what benefit could that be, that he should use his energies to address us? With our imperative of confidentiality within the circle, we could do nothing to help convey his message – or so I thought.

After the Falklands Conflict had been concluded, we heard nothing more from Sir Winston. Shortly afterwards, Marigold also left the circle. As my son was growing, I assumed he had other spirit playmates and thought nothing more of this. A couple of years later, I gained more confidence and eventually started talking to and meeting one

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**Conversations with GHOSTS**, by Alex Tanous, D.D. with Callum E. Cooper, White Crow Books, 2013, 138 pages, \$14.39 paperback, \$9.99 Kindle

As stated in the Introduction, this book is a collection of investigation accounts written by the late Dr. Alex Tanous (1926-1990). They involve a variety of haunting-type phenomena, including apparitions, poltergeist, and other strange sights and sounds, the investigations of which were undertaken by Tanous in collaboration with Dr. Karlis Osis of the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR). However, Tanous died before his research and the book were completed, leaving it to Academy member Callum E. Cooper, a psychologist and doctoral candidate at the University of Northampton, to recently resurrect Tanous's papers and complete the book.

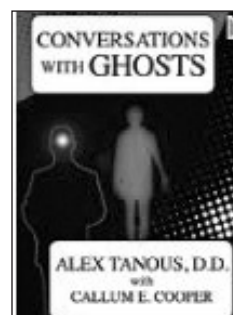
In the Introduction, Cooper provides a fairly comprehensive biography of Tanous, who was an experimental subject of the ASPR during the 1970s and early 80s for his out-of-body capabilities. Osis was one of the researchers studying Tanous. "Aside from Dr. Tanous being able to project his own apparition, which he and several researchers considered to be important evidence for survival research," Cooper notes, "apparitions of the dead were equally of interest to Dr. Tanous and his research." Cooper adds that Tanous approached his research with proper skepticism.

Tanous recalled that at age 11, he was rushed to the hospital after a traumatic experience. "I found

myself out-of-body. I saw my physical body on the table. I saw my double standing nearby, and both of us watched the doctors and nurses operating on me." That experience prompted his search for his "other self." He later discovered that he had the ability to leave his body at will – to bilocate, or to be

in two places at once. He referred to his spirit body as Alex2.

"...I am able, at will, to leave my body, and meet [the ghosts] on their level," Tanous is quoted. "With my personal consciousness, combined with the consciousness of Alex2, the two of us are able to contact the ghosts." He goes on to explain that he was able to relive the scenes that traumatized



occupants of the home and resulted in the haunting. He would see the scenes as if he were watching a movie.

Several fascinating investigations are detailed, including one in which two earthly lovers could not find each other in the afterlife because they were looking for each other in different time periods. Tanous was able to communicate with them and set them straight so that they could find each other.

Although I have never been really interested in haunted houses and related phenomena, I had a difficult time putting this book down once I got into it.

– Michael Tymn

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of the other circle members more socially. I think he wanted to discuss a presentation he was making at the monthly public meeting. I casually mentioned that it had always puzzled me as to why Sir Winston had come to the circle, said what he had, and then that was that. I can remember his knowing smile. It appeared that his girlfriend at the time had been a dressmaker to Mrs. Thatcher, and he admitted to having broken the circle rule of never imparting what had occurred. Instead, he had faithfully relayed every scrap of information to his lady, who had faithfully relayed every scrap of information to – yes, you've guessed it – Mrs. Thatcher. Needless to say, I was amazed and relieved. It was such a reassurance to know that even if I hadn't understood the whys and wherefores, the spirit guides in

general, and Sir Winston in particular, had known exactly what they were doing.

But the story doesn't end there. In approximately 1986, we played host to some young French students, and decided to take a day trip to Chartwell, Sir Winston's old home in Kent. Walking around the rooms, we came across a bedroom and there, on one of the bedside tables, was a small silver photograph frame containing a photo of a little girl. I felt prompted to ask the tourist guide who that was? "Oh," she replied, "that's Marigold." The staff had discovered the photograph tucked away in a drawer and found out that it was Marigold, Sir Winston and Clementine's daughter, who had died very young. They hadn't known there was a photo in existence and the tourist guides had thought it would be a nice gesture to display the photo.

# The Vision of Sir Alister Hardy

by Howard Jones, Ph.D.

Scientists and philosophers have been interested in mediumship and other psychic events for more than a century now; almost since the Fox family heard mysterious rappings in their Hydesville home in New York State in 1848 – an event that led to the inception of spiritualism. Physicist William Crookes started investigating psychic phenomena in 1870, and another physicist, Oliver Lodge, began his study of psychic events, particularly telepathy, a decade later. It was also in this decade that philosopher-psychiatrist William James helped found the American Society for Psychical Research. So there were eminent men who were rationalists by profession who thought that psychic phenomena formed a subject worthy of scientific investigation – and were ultimately persuaded of its validity.

The biologists were somewhat slower to get into this field of study, but a notable contribution was made in England in the second half of the twentieth century by Sir Alister Hardy, who, before leaving Oxford University, made a solemn vow that he would devote the rest of his life to attempting a reconciliation between evolutionary theory and the spiritual nature of man. In 1925, still in his 20s, he took a cutting from a local newspaper about an individual's religious experience and engaged an agency in London to collect similar material for him while he was at sea. He maintained that there was a biological basis for humankind's belief in an external supreme power with which we could communicate and which could in some way influence our lives. Such an innate belief featured prominently in the world-view of Aldous Huxley in his *Perennial Philosophy* and this had a great influence on Hardy. He wanted to study human spiritual consciousness quantitatively and statistically with the aim of forging a link between science and spirituality using the approach adopted by other social sciences.

Alister Clavering Hardy was born in Nottingham in 1896, the son of a successful architect. His birth was less than 40 years after the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and the subsequent scientific and religious controversy that surrounded the theory of evolution would have been a subject of discussion amongst most educated people. Hardy's parents also had a keen interest in natural history and this must surely have influenced the direction of Hardy's professional life. To get an idea of the Nottingham of Hardy's early years we have only to read the novels of D.H. Lawrence, who was born in the Eastwood district of Nottingham a decade earlier (1885). When Hardy's father died in 1904, the family moved to Harrogate in Yorkshire.



Sir Alister Hardy

Hardy's immersion in the social culture of northern England continued through his schooldays, first at Bramcote preparatory school in Scarborough and then at the Oundle School in Northamptonshire, where Richard Dawkins was subsequently a pupil from 1954 to 1959. As with Hardy, Dawkins's family were also interested in natural history where the germ of Dawkins's future career was probably planted.

From Oundle, Hardy went to Oxford but his student days were interrupted by the war and it was to be another three years after the end of the war before he had the opportunity to graduate. Throughout school and college he was torn between science and art as possible future careers as, from an early age, he was an excellent water-colour artist. Many of his paintings can be seen in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in Lampeter, Wales, and at the marine research station in Plymouth, in Devon, England.

After graduation, Hardy started his scientific career as a marine biologist in Lowestoft, Suffolk, studying herring fishing. Then in 1925 he embarked on a two-year oceanographic expedition to the

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Antarctic on the ship *Discovery*. It was during this trip that he designed a prototype Continuous Plankton Recorder for the expedition to sample krill, and it is this invention that is one of the key achievements of his career. On his return Hardy taught successively at the Universities of Hull, Aberdeen and Oxford.

In the early 1930s, Hardy read *Man's Place among the Mammals* by anatomist and Lamarckian naturalist Frederick Wood Jones: this led Hardy to conceive the idea that Man might have had a more aquatic evolutionary history than previously thought. Although he was not the first to suggest what became known as the Aquatic Ape hypothesis it is his name that is usually associated with the idea. Its accredited creator was the German pathologist Max Westernhöfer in 1942.

Sir Alister's passionate interest in human spirituality did not wane and in 1963, when he retired from his post at Oxford to become Emeritus Professor of Zoology, he was also appointed Gifford Lecturer at Aberdeen University. The Gifford Lectures are a series on natural theology that were set up in the nineteenth century by a Scottish judge, Adam, Lord Gifford, at the four oldest Scottish universities – Aberdeen, St. Andrews, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Hardy's lectures there in 1963 and 1965, published in two volumes as *The Living Stream* and *The Divine Flame*, expressed clearly his conviction that religious awareness is a naturally evolving biological attribute which is of the greatest importance for human survival. For theologian Rudolf Otto and Hardy, the numinous has an objective reality.

In 1969, with Sir Alister already in his 70s, he founded the Religious Experience Research Unit at Manchester College, Oxford. The purpose of the Unit was to begin a scientific study of religious experience by collecting and classifying accounts of experience, much as the Victorian naturalists collected specimens and classified them to form the basis of modern biology. In *The Living Stream*, in a chapter called 'Biology and Telepathy' he suggested that 'something akin to telepathy might influence the process of evolution' and discussed how this might happen. He also suggested that some animals share a 'group mind' which he described as 'a sort of psychic blueprint between members of a species'.

These views echoed those expressed earlier in the century by the American entomologist William Morton Wheeler. In this century, Cambridge biologist Rupert Sheldrake has carried out experiments that suggest that animals – particularly dogs – have what he calls 'a seventh sense' beyond the five senses of taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight and the sixth

sense of awareness of electromagnetic fields. In these Gifford lectures Hardy also speculated that all species might be linked to a 'cosmic mind' capable of carrying evolutionary information through space and time. How close is this to Richard Bucke's 'cosmic consciousness' and Jung's 'collective unconscious'? The 'morphogenetic fields' suggested by a number of researchers in the 1920s might be closer to the truth of evolutionary development than any materialist scientist would acknowledge.

In criticism of his more materialist colleagues Hardy said: 'No wonder that those who spend more time on analysis in the laboratory than in the study of living animals in nature are apt to come to the conclusion that in their physical and chemical discoveries they are explaining life.' However he also commented: 'Perhaps the greatest question from the psychology of religion is whether the power that may be called God is entirely within the individual – deep in the subconscious – or is it, at least in part, transcendent'. The idea that it is not so much God that has created Man in His own image but rather that Man has created God in his own image is a view that has been stated even by eminent men of the cloth.

Hardy endorsed the view of Rudolf Otto that the numinous – a term that Otto himself created – should imply not merely Man's sense of the presence of the Divine but also participation in the expressions of that presence through art, poetry and music in the humanities – activities that are uniquely human. In his book *The Biology of God*, Hardy made much of the 'two kinds of knowing' that were described earlier by Michael Polanyi in his book *Personal Knowledge* – knowledge obtained by the senses and reason and that obtained by intuition or instinct. Today some writers describe these as activities of the rational mind and of the spiritual mind, respectively. Hardy comments: 'Evolution is no longer proceeding entirely by Darwinian selection acting upon the wide range of inherited variations in the populations – nor even by what I have called behavioural selection – but by the handing-on of knowledge and ideas and their subsequent development'. This is even more the case today with the electronic dispersal of information – which is not always a positive development. 'A new step, quite unlike anything preceding it, has been taken in the history of creation and so marks a division between man and the rest of the animals as least as great as that separating the animal and plant kingdoms . . . [I]n a strange way [this] great change in evolution . . . is a changeover from Darwinian selection to a process which in certain respects is almost Lamarckian in character'.

In recognition of his pioneering work in a rational exploration of the social significance of religion and spirituality, Sir Alister was awarded the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion just before he died in May 1985.

## An Intriguing 1911 Near-Death Experience

The *Sunday Express* (Liverpool?) of May 26, 1935 carried an account of what today would be called a near-death experience by Mr. W. Martin of Liverpool, England. Martin wrote:

"In 1911, at the age of 16, I was staying about 12 miles away from my own house when a high wall was blown down by a sudden gust of wind as I was passing. A huge coping stone hit me on top of my head. "It then seemed as if I could see myself lying on the ground, huddled up, with one corner of the stone resting on my head and quite a number of people rushing toward me. I watched them move the stone and someone took off his coat and put it under my head, and I heard all their comments. 'Fetch a doctor.' 'His neck is broken.' 'Skull smashed!'

"He then wanted to know if anyone knew where I lived, and on being told I was lodging just around the corner, he instructed them to carry me there.

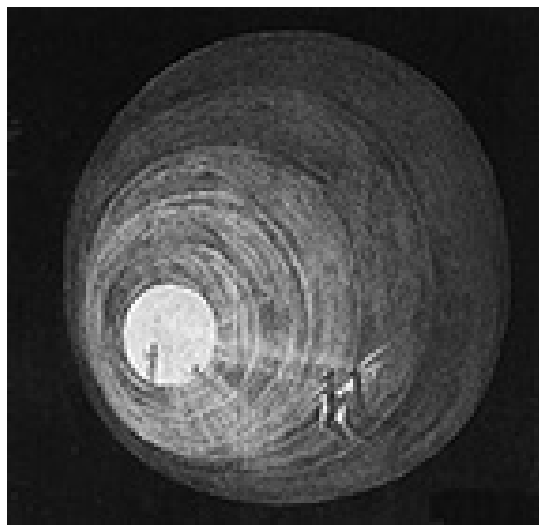
"Now all this time it appeared as though I were disembodied from the form lying on the ground and suspended in midair in the center of the group, and I could hear everything that was being said.

"As they started to carry me it was remarked that it would come as a blow to my people, and I was immediately conscious of a desire to be with my mother. Instantly I was at home, and father and mother were just sitting down to their midday meal. On my entrance mother sat bolt upright in her chair and said, 'Bert, something has happened to our boy.'

"There followed an argument, but my mother refused to be pacified, and said that if she caught the 2 p.m. train she could be with me before three.

"She had hardly left the room when there came a knock at the front door. It was a porter from the railway station with a telegram saying I was badly hurt.

"Then suddenly I was again transported – this time it seemed to be against my will – to a bedroom where a woman whom I recognized was in bed, and two other women were quietly bustling around, and a doctor was leaning over the bed. Then the doctor had a baby in his hands. At once I became aware



of an almost irresistible impulse to press my face through the back of the baby's head so that my face would come out at the same place as the child's.

"The doctor said, 'It looks as though we have lost them both,' and again, I felt the urge to take the baby's place to show him he was wrong, but the thoughts of my mother crying turned my thoughts in her direction, when straightaway I was in a railway carriage with her and my father.

"I was still with them when they arrived at my lodging and were shown into my room where I had been put to bed. Mother was beside the bed and I longed to comfort her, and the realization came that I ought to do the same thing I had felt impelled to do in the case of the baby and climb into the body on the bed.

"At last I succeeded, and the effort caused the real me to sit up in bed fully conscious. Mother made me lie down again, but I said that I was all right, and remarked that it was odd that she knew something was wrong before the porter had brought the telegram.

"Both she and Dad were amazed at my knowledge. Their astonishment was further increased when I repeated almost word for word some of the conversation they had had at home and in the train. I said that I had been close to birth as well as death, and told them that Mrs. Wilson, who lived close to us at home, had had a baby that day, but it was dead because I would not get into its body. We subsequently learned that Mrs. Wilson died on the same day at 2:05 p.m. after delivering a stillborn girl."

-- MET

Reference: *Transition*, by Charles Hampton, St. Albans Press, Los Angeles, 1943, pp. 15-17.

Married partners almost always meet after death. They recognize each other, join up, and for a time live together. If they see eye to eye and feel drawn to one another, they continue in their conjugal life.

— Emanuel Swedenborg



## Defining and Summoning Strength

by Fermín Hernández Hernández

Will power, Love, Wisdom and Justice are the values that are indeed the human spirit; our true constitution is not of blood, muscle and bone tissue. Our being is made up of feelings, conscience, freedom, intellect, morality and spirituality, and we have to go along treasuring our evolution to be ever more perfect and to be closer to God.

But in general, our humanity is not for these achievements, but to live as easy and comfortable a life, procuring happiness however fleeting it may be; to get the most with the least effort, neglecting the spiritual part and the goal the evolving spirit has come here to achieve in life, and, generally being in the hands of a pleasurable life without thinking of the consequences, overpowered by materiality

Is the human being of today a combination of selfishness, pride and vanity, violence, full of moral miseries without willpower to face the trials and vicissitudes of a life with noble dignity, and unable to act on the dictates of his conscience, which has been supplanted by uncontrolled materialistic habits? Yet, still there are many people who one day in their lives, finally feel the need to improve internally, the desire to find answers to many questions. They feel emptiness inside that they cannot fill with anything so far, feel uncomfortable, unhappy and disagree with the general behavior they observe on the world scene.

All this is due to the force generated by the Law of Evolution within our spirit which compels us to take a step further for Progress.

Acquiring *strength* is in this sense an invaluable weapon in order to break with everything that binds us and holds us back, and is preventing us in leading a life according to the impulses that conveys our spirit.

We need to be free of impediments, of all that is troublesome to the full development of our spiritual side; which through awareness of our conscience cries out for us to step away from. *Acting with strength, self-control, vigor and courage of spirit...we can obtain the energy to be strong against the weaknesses, fears, difficulties and mistakes that we as humans are going to create, yet do not want.* There are many experiences that we have left to live in the course of our existence, the problems that can arise, circumstances we may come to unprepared, unpleasant things to which we have to deal with, etc. All these situations we should not ignore, or avoid, but what concerns us is to *mature with them by taking responsibility, and in this way acquire strength, drive, courage and bravery, and learn to master the circumstances, before these get out of our control.* ...From a spiritual standpoint - perseverance,



patience, work—in short, are the best allies to achieve goals...It does not work [to say], "I'm like this, and cannot change," absolutely. We but only have to look at the models that history has shown us of personalities that have become strong in self-denial, in giving, in love, to teach the ignorant, in hard work to accomplish a purpose, and in performing with exemplary conduct. *Strength, and to implement our will power is a valuable habit, incomparable to anything, if we learn to use it, if we want to progress...*

Why say, "I cannot acquire this"? Why say, "I cannot do that"? "How hard I try, but I cannot stop this habit, this tendency, this weakness"?

Make no mistake, yes, we can, but we have to want to do it sincerely, and put the necessary will power into doing it... Visualizing that there exists in us will power to help us achieve our goals, to hold fast to our ideals available for moral and spiritual work to which we are called, that force of will is not lacking, because God has given it to us as a fundamental resource to progress.

But again, we do not practice it; but that will power is our lifeline, it will strengthen us spiritually and in our soul forge a defense against... defects, vices, bad habits, etc., etc. Strength is to own yourself, because you know what you want. Strength is making commitments to develop the faculties of your mind, and be responsible for carrying them out as dignified as one can...

Your conscience must be your counselor and at the same time your impartial judge; she is whom we must give an account, and if we have not done well, we should be ashamed and have the ability to react quickly to fix the error.

Strength is not flinching at difficulties... Strength is sacrifice.

*Translated by Academy member Yvonne Limoges, of the Spiritist Society of Florida, this is an abridged excerpt from an article from the on-line newsletter (Oct. issue) of the Villena Group in Alicante, Spain on website, [www.amorpazycaridaid.com](http://www.amorpazycaridaid.com) Printed with permission.*

## Guest Editorial: Overcoming Materialism

by R. Craig Hogan. Ph.D.

The rock of the truth that will slay the dragon of materialism is afterlife communication. When all people are able to experience continuing relationships with their loved ones not using bodies, proving to them that we are eternal beings having a physical experience, materialism will expire. All people will live together in love and harmony.

Helping people understand the truths about the survival of consciousness is of critical importance now. Today, we live in a spiritually impoverished world dominated by materialism. We as a species are destroying our planet, widening our separation from each other, and becoming increasingly violent and hostile. The only force that will enable humankind to raise itself out of this quagmire is the realization among all people that we are spiritual beings having a physical experience. Afterlife communication brings people to that realization.

Surveys do indicate that as many as 70% or 80% of respondents believe life continues after death, but the sentiment is shallow; it has little effect on people's lives. Nearly all in our society fear death, grieve after a death as though the loved one were gone forever, and live convinced that this short life is all there is, so the only things of importance are what I regard as "me" and what I acquire as mine. People are engaged in the infinite pursuit of infinite wealth, with no understanding of whom we are in eternity, the nature of our relationships to each other, and the reality of our intimacy with the Higher Power.

By contrast, near-death experiencers no longer fear death, are confident their loved ones are alive and well on the other side, and live their lives with greater love and compassion for others. In the same way, grieving people who have guided afterlife connections in a psychotherapist's office enter the sessions bereaved, often sobbing, and leave comforted and joyful, knowing their loved ones are alive and well, just in a different form. The key to changing the deeply entrenched belief that death is the end that is afflicting humankind is for people to have their own, life-changing afterlife communication experiences.

The aspects of this connection with people on other planes of life are all the areas the Academy



R. Craig Hogan. Ph.D.

explores: psi, the nature of consciousness, mediumship, the mind outside of the brain, the nature of reality, spirituality, and the many other facets involved in the eternal mind. Our 2014 conference is devoted to the many ways people are now using to communicate with their loved ones. This area of study is just now being explored. It needs a body of scholars to draw the parts into a coherent whole. The Academy is in a position to be that body of scholars.

Rochelle Wright and a dozen other psychotherapists are helping clients have afterlife connections in their offices, but we don't know how that happens or why the therapy method they're using encourages it. Sonia Rinaldi is having people connect with loved ones over the phone. How does that happen? How can we make that happen more easily? The questions are just now being asked. The Academy could help humankind find the answers, and bring afterlife understanding and communications to a grieving, suffering humanity. That would abolish materialism.

The more commonly society realizes the profound truths near-death experiences and communication with loved ones on the other side teach, the more we will live in peace and brotherhood as a species. Eventually, the knowledge of our eternal natures will stop society's headlong, self-destructive plunge into the abyss of materialism. That is the truth I believe the Academy is called to bring to humankind at this critical time in history.

### Ponder on This

"The history of thought is marked by man's perseverance to grasp and understand the reality around him and to give it some sort of satisfactory explanation. The central question of the existence of the soul in the human being has been and continues to be very much debated, having been approached from diverse points of view, with greater or lesser depth. And, the disparity in opinions is found not only between those who deny its existence and those who acknowledge it, but among the latter, there is a great variety of opinion with respect to its nature and attributes. It is within this scenario where the opposing tendencies of materialism and spiritualism have waged a rough battle, wielding their best arguments to defend the validity of their respective theories.

"...Spiritualism, therefore, includes the entirety of religions and philosophical systems that accept the existence of a spiritual substance as the foundation of all reality, as opposed to materialism. In this sense, all religions are variations of spiritualism, as are those philosophic principles that give the spirit an ontological category and give it preeminence over matter."

— Jon Aizpurua  
(abridged from *Fundamentals of Spiritism*, 2013)

## Dying Words

Here are some dying words that have been recorded over the years.

*If I had the strength to hold a pen, I would tell you how easy and delightful it is to die.*

– William Hunter, M.D.

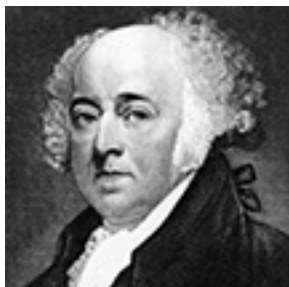
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*Thomas Jefferson survives*  
– John Adams (Jefferson died an hour or two before Adams on July 4, 1826; his spirit apparently looked in on Adams, his good friend.)

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*Oh Wow! Oh Wow! Oh Wow!*

– Steve Jobs



John Adams

## PRESIDENT:

### From page 3

might hold as his child directs his adult into more feeling behavior. Just as your spiritual guides parent you by giving you thoughts which become things, you need to parent this child within in order to make more positive habits to aid in creating your vision/s on your journey called life. Please let me know what you discover at karen@karenherrick.com.

– Karen E. Herrick, Ph.D

*The Searchlight* is published quarterly (March, June, September, and December) by The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc.

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Opinions and interests expressed in *The Searchlight* are those of the authors and should not be construed as indicative of approval or concurrence by The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc. (ASCSI) and its Board of Directors or Advisory Council.

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*It's very beautiful over there.*

– Thomas Edison

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*Victory! Eternal Victory!*

– Eunice Cobb

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*Earth recedes – Heaven opens before me!*

– Dwight L. Moody

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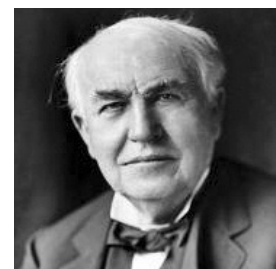
*Oh! Do you hear the music?* – Mary Wilcox

\*\*\*

*Yes, yes, I come, I come!*

– Lillian Lee

\*\*\*



Thomas Edison

*George! Austin!*

– Alec Harris (George and Austin were his deceased brothers).

\*\*\*

*It is beautiful!*

– Elizabeth Barrett

Browning

\*\*\*



Elizabeth B. Browning

*Oh, Arlene, it's so strange here. I'm in a 'never-never' land. I'm halfway between two worlds.*

*Ma and Pa are here and I can see them, but I can't see you any more.*

– Eleanor Herrick

\*\*\*

*Pull me up... Please pull me up....*

*Hold me tighter now.*

– Richard Trimmer (speaking to his wife Nancy, who had died earlier in the day)

### New Members:

John Cook - Palmyra, NY  
Thornton Doss - Aurora, CO  
Calvin King - Albuquerque, NM  
Alan Klavans - Bethesda, MD  
Pat Leavell - Norfolk, VA  
Robert Massar - Rochester, NY  
Rev. Dr. Richard & Elizabeth Myers - Scottsville, NY  
Sven Warner - Rochester, NY



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#### MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc. is to discern, develop and disseminate knowledge of how consciousness studies and paranormal phenomena may relate to and enhance the development of the human spirit.

## Explaining Death to a Child: Give Us Your Views

How do you explain death to a young child? The question was recently addressed in a nationally syndicated newspaper advice column. A reader asked Carolyn Hax, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, how she should answer questions by her 5-year-old child about dying, death, God, and heaven. Hax replied that the way she dealt with her kids' relentless grilling on the subject was to tell them that death is an ordinary, natural yet often sad part of life. She further told them everything that lives eventually dies, that most people live for 70 years or more, although some die sooner, even children. She added that some people believe you see God and some don't, some believe in heaven, some don't, and that no one alive can be sure – we can only *believe*.

For the most part, Internet advice on the subject seems to beat around the bush or completely avoid the afterlife aspect, leaving it to the parent or adult to explain his or her own beliefs to the child. One of the standard and "safest" answers is to tell the child that the deceased loved one will "live on" in his or her heart.

Academy members are asked to give their views on this subject by writing a "letter" to a child of seven years of age, a hypothetical son or a

daughter or a grandchild, explaining death and its various concomitants. It might be approached as a dying grandparent writing to a grandchild or a parent in the military writing a letter to be given to a child if he or she does not return home. However, other approaches are invited. They may include how a member explained it all to his/her child, or simply how it should be explained.

We will plan to print as many of these submissions as space permits in the July issue of the *Journal for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies*. They should not exceed 1,000 words, although some may be as short as 250 words. Should there be more submissions than space permits, priority will be given to those first received, although others might be used in the October issue of the Journal. This is not a contest and there will be no judging of the submissions.

Please send all submissions to [metgat@aol.com](mailto:metgat@aol.com) with a copy to [pauljhauser@gmail.com](mailto:pauljhauser@gmail.com) prior to April 15. They should be submitted as a Word or email document. Those not having computers can mail their submissions to the editor at the address in the masthead. "Explaining Death to a Child" should be the subject line.

— MET